

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 12 and 15 have been amended, and claims 2, 4-7, 14 and 16-19 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 8-13, 15 and 20-22 are pending. No new matter has been added.

The applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the teleconference held on March 17, 2004 wherein a demonstration of the invention was provided via use of a commercial internet-based software program. An inventor and the undersigned attorney explained the present invention and argued that novel features exist in the claims that distinguish them from the cited art. In particular, claim 1 was discussed in view of the Watson et al. patent. However, no agreement was reached.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application.

The sections set forth below are presented in the same order as that of the Action for ease of reference.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-6, 8-18 and 20-22 were rejected for allegedly being anticipated by Watson et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,912,666 ("Watson").

Independent claim 1 has been amended and now recites providing a hot-spot for restoring the non-modal dialog box when the cursor moves over the hot-spot, wherein the hot-spot is re-locatable by a user to any location on the workspace. Independent claim 12 has been amended in a similar matter. Consequently, dependent claims 2, 4-7, 14 and 16-19 have been canceled. No new matter has been added.

The invention as recited in claim 1 is a method for automatically dismissing option information that appears on a screen as a computer user is working. The method includes displaying a workspace on a computer screen, displaying at least one icon, and presenting a non-modal dialog box within the workspace when a predetermined icon is chosen. In addition, the method includes providing a preference option that, when enabled by a user, hides the non-modal dialog box when a cursor moves off a frame of the dialog box, and includes providing a hot-spot for restoring the non-modal dialog box when the cursor moves over the hot-spot, wherein the hot-spot is re-locatable by the user to any location on the workspace. Thus, the present technique includes automatic dismissal of the non-modal dialog box when the user moves her cursor off of the frame, and restoration of the non-modal dialog box when the cursor moves over the hot-spot. As now claimed, such operation not

only maximizes the amount of computer screen real estate space available to display work, but it also provides a convenient means for restoring the non-modal dialog box. The invention permits a user to chose a hot-spot so that the non-modal dialog box will reappear in a desirable location when it is needed. The benefits of such a technique include minimizing the use of the computer mouse or other input device, and permitting the user to devote more time to actually working on the drawing project rather than wasting time calling up, moving and/or dismissing dialog boxes. (See application, page 4, lines 3-10).

The cited Watson et al. patent discloses an object-oriented global cursor tool. Watson et al. also describes a method for managing multiple tasks at the same time, and a cross application tool server to allow any cursor tool and any application to function together (see col. 1, lines 41-46). Watson et al. does not teach or suggest to provide a hot-spot for restoring a non-modal dialog box when the cursor moves over the hot-spot, and further does not teach or suggest a hot-spot that is re-locatable by the user to any location on the workspace. It is noted that Figs. 8 and 13, and col. 11, lines 11-12 and col. 9, lines 57-62 of Watson et al. were cited for allegedly illustrating the use of a hot-spot. The applicants respectfully assert that the cited Figs. 8 and 13, and these cited passages are not relevant. In particular, Fig. 8 shows a desktop with various frames and a command panel 830, and Fig. 13 shows the selection process for a "smudge tool" (see Watson et al. col. 10, line 63 to col. 11, line 1 and col. 11, lines 11-12). Further, the cited passage at col. 9, lines 57-68 merely recites that a user can click-drag an icon to pull out an associated command panel, and that the command panel bars can be removed and placed on the desktop. Single-clicking a command panel icon selects a default tool, and Fig. 4 shows an example of a command panel bar. The described operation concerning command panels and command panel bars is not equivalent to providing a hot-spot for restoring a non-modal dialog box, wherein such a hot-spot is re-locatable by a user to any location on the workspace. The use of a hot-spot having such characteristics is required by independent claims 1 and 12. Since this feature is absent in the system of Watson et al., the applicants respectfully assert that claims 1 and 12 are not anticipated.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejections of independent claims 1 and 12. In addition, pending claims 3, 8-11, 13, 15 and 20-22 all directly or indirectly depend on either claim 1 or claim 12, and thus should also be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Dependent claims 7 and 19 were rejected for allegedly being unpatentable over Watson in view of Screen Dumps of Microsoft Word 2000 ("MS Word").

Claims 7 and 19 have been canceled herein, and thus this rejection is now moot. Consequently, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103 rejections is appropriate.

It is noted that the MS Word reference does not cure the deficiency of Watson et al. of failing to suggest or teach to provide a hot-spot for restoring a non-modal dialog box when the cursor moves over the hot-spot, wherein the hot-spot is re-locatable by the user to any location on the workspace. Therefore, the Watson et al. and MS Word references, either alone or in combination, do not suggest or teach the method of claim 1 or the computer program of claim 12 as amended. Thus, the applicants respectfully assert that claims 1 and 12 are patentably distinct thereover. Further, dependent claims 3, 8-11, 13, 15 and 20-22 are also patentably distinct thereover for at least the same reasons.

In view of the comments and amendments made herein, the applicants respectfully submit that the entire application is now in condition for allowance, early notice of which would be appreciated. Should the Examiner not agree that all pending claims are allowable, then a personal or telephonic interview is respectfully requested to discuss any remaining issues and expedite the eventual allowance of these claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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